

Devising Teaching & Learning Activities

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NOTE: This section builds on the previous section: Planning your Teaching

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1. DEVISING TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Which of these sounds the better statement during planning?

- 1 **"RIGHT, I'M GOING TO RUN A GROUP MEETING WITH ME IN THE CHAIR, SO WHAT SORT OF THINGS DO I WANT THEM TO SHOW ME?"**

- 2 **"RIGHT, I WANT THEM TO SHOW ME THAT THEY UNDERSTAND X, Y AND Z. WHAT SORT OF TEACHING ACTIVITY WILL HELP THEM DO THAT?"**

What you want to teach, and what you want students to learn, should determine the teaching and learning activity (TLA). Unfortunately, in a lot of cases, the activity is determined first, often simply by habit, and this shapes the type and extent of the learning. It is the same with project briefs – often in art and design, we decide what the students are going to do first by dreaming up ‘exciting’ briefs, and expect the learning to follow. Using the planning grid in the previous section in the order we have arranged it gets you to put learning first. Chances are you can still use the briefs you were going too, but what is learnt is managed better.

For example, a traditional lecture is good for transmitting content, but not so good at promoting discussion or experimentation with ideas. Small-group activities are good for intellectual and personal development, but not so good at promoting private reflection. Critiques are good at evaluating aesthetic qualities, but poor at evaluating learning.

Things you need to consider when deciding what types of TLA teaching and learning activities to use are:

- ❖ **MAKE SURE THEY ARE APPROPRIATE TO THE THINGS YOU WANT STUDENTS TO BE ABLE TO DO, AND TO THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE YOU EXPECT**

- ❖ **HOW EXPERIENCED YOU ARE IN THAT PARTICULAR METHOD**

- ❖ **THE PRACTICALITIES – HAVE YOU GOT THE ROOM, FURNITURE, EQUIPMENT AND TIME AVAILABLE?**

With regard to experience, try not to fall into the trap of sticking to what you know best – you will probably find yourself only ever using one or two different types of teaching activity, and end up becoming boring or predictable. You will also find that your sessions do not achieve the things you want them to. Students are more forgiving than you think, and will appreciate new, effective types of session,

particularly if you make them student-focussed. A well-planned session will survive a few mistakes. An unplanned, 'safe' session will hardly achieve anything. If you want to try something 'different' and it is appropriate and practical, then do it – and if you ask around you will probably find someone who can help you prepare and evaluate it afterwards.

1.1. STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING VERSUS TRADITIONAL TEACHING

There is nothing wrong with "traditional" teaching – it is just that it is not always appropriate to what you want students to learn. A traditional "crit" for example is good at letting the teacher get an overview of the aesthetic progress of a class, but very poor at understanding the extent of students' learning. It is also a long and often dull if not frightening process for students. There may be other ways to achieve the intended outcomes, but in all subjects, not just ours, there is a tendency to stick with what we know – or how we were taught.

But what exactly do we mean by "student-centred"? In their *Handbook for Teachers in Universities and Colleges*¹ Cannon and Newble list some of the distinctions between "traditional" and student-centred learning, which we have adapted slightly for art and design below:

ADAPTED FROM CANNON AND NEWBLE

STUDENT CENTRED	TRADITIONAL
Students have a responsible and active role in planning their learning, interacting with teachers and other students, researching, and assessing	Students are often passive (no role in planning learning; sitting in lectures; listening to tutors talking about their work)
Students required to make choices about what and how to learn	Most decisions made by the teacher
Emphasis on integrating learning across the curriculum	Emphasis on learning this subject only
Emphasis on enquiry-type activities	Emphasis on receiving information
Teacher as guide, mentor and facilitator of learning	Teacher as expert dispenser of knowledge and controller of activities
Intrinsic motivation (from interest, curiosity, responsibility)	Extrinsic motivation (grades, teacher praise)
Focus on cooperative learning	Individual learning and competition between students
Learning can occur anywhere	Learning confined to fixed venues (lecture room, studio, library etc)

¹Cannon and Newble, 2000

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Greater flexibility in learning and teaching	Relatively inflexible arrangements
Greater flexibility in assessment with self and peer assessment becoming more common	Assessment seen as the responsibility of the teacher with work towards a final performance deadline
Long-term perspective: emphasis on lifelong learning	Short-term perspective: emphasis on completing assigned work and learning for final project or exhibition

1.2. TYPES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITY

Try to think of at least five different types of teaching and learning activity you could use, or have used, in your teaching. Do this before looking at the list below.

LECTURE	SET-READING	CASE STUDY
VIDEO	DEMONSTRATION	TUTOR-LED DISCUSSION
STUDENT-LED DISCUSSION	PROBLEM SOLVING	FIELD RESEARCH
SELF ASSESSMENT	PEER ASSESSMENT	BRAINSTORM
CRITICAL INCIDENT	MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST	GAME
SIMULATION	SHORT TASK	ROLE PLAY

SOME TYPES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITY

This is just a small list. What's important to remember is that even showing a video is a teaching and learning activity – so long as it helps to achieve a particular outcome. Maybe, looking at this list, you might think some are not particularly appropriate – but remember, you fit the teaching and learning activity to the outcome. In our fictional session in the “Planning Your Teaching” section, for example, a quick multiple-choice quiz might be a great way to “warm up” the students by trying to find out what they know about the different roles in an advertising agency. Running the quiz again at the end of the session would then enable you to check if they have learnt anything. Quick, simple, and potentially a lot of fun. But also informative and a direct contribution to student learning and evaluation of that learning.

Turning back to this fictional session, we can see from our list of outcomes and threshold performances that some appropriate teaching and learning activities spring to mind quite easily. At this stage, just a few words of description are enough.

AIMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TO DISCUSS THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN FOR SAFEWAY SUPERMARKETS, AND THE USE OF AUDIENCE FEEDBACK IN CLIENT PRESENTATIONS ● TO CHECK ON PROGRESS AND IDENTIFY ANY SPECIFIC TUTORIAL NEEDS 		
OUTCOME <small>BY THE END OF THE SESSION, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:</small>	THRESHOLD PERFORMANCE	TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES
1 Outline the process of commissioning a campaign	Devise through discussion a flow chart showing the basic process and identifying key players and factors	Video from Open University (needs to be viewed before the tutorial) General discussion (tutor-led) Small group discussion to produce flowcharts on flipchart paper
2 Use qualitative and quantitative methods to test concepts	Understand the difference between quantitative and qualitative research Carry out a small focus group Conduct a simple survey	Short presentation on basic methods of research (focus group and questionnaire) Play section of video with focus group Play clip of Victoria Wood questionnaire sketch Set task for small groups to carry out before next session. Give out notes
3 Evaluate a case study and identify key incidents	Contribute usefully to a discussion Write a short (500 word) report with a partner	Discussion as above Remind students about the written component of the module Hand out example case studies from <i>Campaign</i> and <i>Marketing Week</i> etc
4 Plan further study and support needs	Write a plan for the coming week to carry out the set tasks Submit a copy to me along with areas where they think they will need help	Give out blank filofax-type sheets with a sample Ask students to fill them in during the last ten minutes or (if out of time) over lunch to be handed in to the office by the end of the day

THE PLANNING GRID WITH TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES (TLAs)

2. ASSESSING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

There is no point in teaching if you are not going to evaluate how well students have learnt.

This evaluation can be informal, even invisible to the student, or it can be formal (in which case evaluation becomes assessment) to the extent that the evaluation contributes in some way to their final mark for the module or course. For example, the assessment criteria for the module may refer to 'student contribution to discussion' as a component, in which case the evaluation is formal, and the student will require feedback to help them improve before a final judgement is made.

FORMATIVE OR SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT?

Everybody should be given a chance to improve, and any evaluation of students is intended to help this process of reflection and self-improvement. If you did something wrong without knowing it, and were fired as a result, you would feel aggrieved – far better for someone to point out what you did wrong and how to do better next time.

A judgement of performance that is intended to help students improve before a final assessment is called 'formative'. You provide the student with some form of constructive feedback, and maybe an indication of the grade they are likely to get at that point. You need to build in opportunities for formative assessment throughout any scheme of work.

When you give a student a grade stands as the final examination grade, it is called 'summative'.

For any session you need to make a judgement about the students – have they achieved the things you wanted them to achieve? You can do this on an individual basis, or as a group. By deciding beforehand the level of performance you want the students to achieve you can select the appropriate teaching method and learning activities.

AIMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TO DISCUSS THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN FOR SAFEWAY SUPERMARKETS, AND THE USE OF AUDIENCE FEEDBACK IN CLIENT PRESENTATIONS ● TO CHECK ON PROGRESS AND IDENTIFY ANY SPECIFIC TUTORIAL NEEDS 			
OUTCOME <small>BY THE END OF THE SESSION, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:</small>	THRESHOLD PERFORMANCE	TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT
1 Outline the process of commissioning a campaign	Devise through discussion a flow chart showing the basic process and identifying key players and factors	Video from Open University (needs to be viewed before the tutorial) General discussion (tutor-led) Small group discussion to produce flowcharts on flipchart paper	Put the flowcharts on the wall and identify as a group similarities and differences. Hand out my version and ask the students to compare the two	Tutors will look for evidence of proper process in the final module assignment
2 Use qualitative and quantitative methods to test concepts	Understand the difference between quantitative and qualitative research Carry out a small focus group Conduct a simple survey	Short presentation on basic methods of research (focus group and questionnaire) Play section of video with focus group Play clip of Victoria Wood questionnaire sketch Set task for small groups to carry out before next session. Give out notes	Use questions to check for general understanding. Correct any problems	Focus group and survey results, as well as the action taken based on them, will be assessed in the final project
3 Evaluate a case study and identify key incidents	Contribute usefully to a discussion Write a short (500 word) report with a partner	Discussion as above Remind students about the written component of the module Hand out example case studies from <i>Campaign</i> and <i>Marketing Week</i> etc	Observe student discussion and identify students who appear to be having problems. Make note and pass on to module leader	Report is an assessed component of the module with a deadline one week after this session
4 Plan further study and support needs	Write a plan for the coming week to carry out the set tasks Submit a copy to me along with areas where they think they will need help	Give out blank filofax-type sheets with a sample Ask students to fill them in during the last ten minutes or (if out of time) over lunch to be handed in to the office by the end of the day		

A PLANNING GRID COMPLETED

3. IDENTIFYING REQUIRED RESOURCES

The planning grid should allow you to identify key resources and to book them well in advance.

One resource that is vital is a room – make sure you are given one that is appropriate to the type of session you want to run. Often, rooms are booked before any planning is done, but obviously that is the wrong way round. The session we outlined above would work well in a medium-sized room with chairs and tables that can be moved around. It might work in a lecture theatre, though not as well. It would not work well at all in a studio where the group size will be too small for the room, making it an unfriendly environment.

If you were given a studio for the session above, one way of coping would be to double up the group size and double the length of the session with a good break in the middle. This would allow you to introduce some new activities such as a mock focus group, or you could ask students to carry out a short questionnaire in their break.

But ideally, get a room that is appropriate. The earlier you know what you need, the earlier you can horse trade with somebody else (who might be glad of the swap). Another thing to bear in mind is that the people who control room bookings are actually human beings (despite what you might have heard) and only make inappropriate bookings because they're never told what people really want. If you turn up with a specific request well in advance, you will have powerful friends forever.

Apart from a room, we can also see from our grid that we need to make sure the library has at least one copy of a particular video available during the week before, and on the day of the session for you to use. Letting the librarians know in advance about the resources students will be looking at is also a very good idea. Contrary to popular belief, librarians are not only trained in stamping books and looking stern – they will leap at the chance of doing something interesting, and letting them have a copy of your plan might result in them unearthing some fantastic resources, and being able to answer student enquiries.

For the room you will also need a VCR and, if possible, a data projector rather than a TV. Flipcharts, blu-tak and marker pens can also be sourced, and you can see from the plan that you will need to produce some worksheets and copies of relevant articles from two magazines. You may be able to get help producing these things from the course team or admin staff (support varies from institution to institution, but again people tend to be more helpful to those who are well-planned and specific in their requests).

4. THE DRAFT PLAN

After you have completed your grid and are happy with it, it's time to produce your session plan. Some institutions will have pro formas for this, and it might be useful to create a template and put it in the Templates folder of your Word application if that is what you use. When drawing up your plan, place things in a logical order – you do not have to go through each learning outcome one by one.

Here is a simple plan for the session above:

Before the session students should watch the video reserved for them in the library and carry out the activities on the accompanying sheet.

Time	Activity	Resources
2	Introduce the session and outline its aims and objectives	OHT & projector
	Check that students watched the video as they were asked to	
	Remind students that on the video, one of the contributors mentions the usual order of doing things	
10	Ask the students to get into groups of two or three and draw a flowchart of how they understand an advertising campaign to be developed	Flip chart sheets, blu-tak and pens
10	Ask students to stick their charts on the wall. Put my version up and lead general discussion on things missed out. Probably need to draw attention to what happens before the campaign is decided upon, the way media are chosen, the role of audience research, and the way ideas are evaluated	My outline of a typical campaign dev. process
10	Show video of several TV ads from a recent Safeway campaign using Jamie Oliver. Hand out copies of print ads from different magazines	Video of ads, photocopies of press & mag ads
10	Ask students to look at the print ads in their groups and try to guess why some are different	
	BREAK – ASK STUDENTS TO CONTINUE THEIR DISCUSSION OVER COFFEE	
15	Show three 'ad breaks' from different TV programmes illustrating how the type of ad changes depending on time, programme etc. Lead discussion on the link between audience, message and media	Video of ad breaks
5	Ask for student opinions on the Safeway ads, and begin to focus the discussion on to objective analysis (i.e. "You may not like it, but is it aimed at you?")	Whiteboard and pen to summarise key points
5	Show section of video in which qualitative and quantitative research are mentioned. Ask for ideas about what the difference is, and examples of methods	
5	Show clip of Victoria Wood 'mayonnaise' sketch as an example of how not to do a questionnaire	Video of Victoria Wood
8	Hand out notes on different research methods and show a video of a focus group in action. Lead short discussion on the pros and cons of a focus group. Hand out articles about Skoda cars and the 'Brown Linkage Test' and ask students to read them after the session	Notes and articles, task outlines
2	Set tasks to carry out a questionnaire and small focus group related to current module assignment	
2	Remind students about the written report that is required for this module and hand out a bullet point list of what is required and how it fits into today's session. Advise that they should really try to do the report by the end of this week	
7	Hand out blank time-planning sheets and ask students to spend five minutes quickly identifying their commitments for the week ahead (work, socialising etc) and then identify times to do the tasks set today. At the bottom of the sheet they should identify any areas where they think they will need help. Ask them to make a copy of the sheet and hand it in to the office by 4.30pm	Time plan sheets and examples
5	Outline the aims and objectives of the session again and how they have been covered. Ask for quick questions and feedback. Check everyone is happy, then let them go	First transparency

This plan covers just over 90 minutes, which is the time allowed. By having a plan like this you can quickly see if the pace is acceptable, and whether there are changes to the pace to keep interest going. Looking at the plan above, how might you improve it?

4.1. DISCUSSION

As a first draft, this plan seems fine. The session begins with a clear statement of aims and objectives, so the students know what they are doing, and why they are doing it.

In terms of pace there is a good variation between student discussion, teacher exposition, and some activities that will give the teacher time to observe and listen in to students.

The break is well-placed so that students go to it with something on their mind. Many students will use break time to discuss the session and guiding their discussion in this way can be useful.

Potential problems exist, however – the session overruns slightly, and there is no room for manoeuvre. Some discussions may go down an interesting route, and it would be a good idea to leave 10 minutes or so for that to happen, or for accidents (rewinding the video to the right place or getting the students organised into groups). Remember that even though the break is only supposed to last 15-minutes we are allowing another 15 minutes for stragglers, settling down etc, so there is potentially some time to be salvaged there. The time between the end of a break and the restart of the session is a good time to make yourself available to students with problems and questions, or to deal with those who turned up late. But even so, the plan is a bit too full.

Overall then, the next revision of the session probably needs to discard something without losing anything – an interesting balancing act – and lessen the impact of some of the activities in terms of disturbance. It might not be necessary to show the video clip of the focus group, but instead ask students to read the handouts and remind them that the video has an example if they want to look at it again later. That saves eight minutes from our outline. You might also decide against letting students organise themselves as that often leads to lots of noise – simpler in this case to ask them to work with the people they are sitting next to.

Giving your plan away

You should let other people have your plan:

- ❖ THE MODULE LEADER
- ❖ THE COURSE LEADER
- ❖ OTHER TUTORS ON THE SAME MODULE
- ❖ THE STUDENTS

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There are various requirements for courses to keep documentation like this, and producing it as a by-product of the planning process is a lot easier than producing it after the event! Don't be tempted to get precious about your plans:

THERESA GETS PERSONAL

Theresa has been asked to come in and run a series of tutorials on pattern cutting with fashion students. She prepares a scheme of work for the tutorials, and then plans each one in more detail.

Halfway through, the module leader mentions in passing that Theresa still hasn't given her a set of her session plans for her records. Theresa says that she doesn't want to hand them over in case they decide to employ someone else next year and they use her plans. The module leader says that she needs them as a record of what is being taught and to help students who miss sessions. When eventually she is persuaded to hand them over she includes a copyright statement at the bottom of each page.

Even though the sessions went well, the course team feel that Theresa's attitude is a bit odd and she isn't asked back the next year. Her replacement looks at her plans and thinks there are some good ideas, and can certainly learn from what worked and what didn't, but believes that everyone teaches differently so prefers to devise her own.

You may think giving your plan to students is a bit odd, but as we said at the start of this section, letting them see in advance what they will be doing with you is an aid to improving attendance and preparation. We wouldn't suggest giving them the same plan you use, but certainly a good outline, like the one on the next page 'Jamie Oliver and the naked advertising process'.

Let your students have a set of plans for all your sessions at the start of the module, or get them inserted into the module handbook. Make sure you include and explain verbally the proviso that plans are subject to change depending on circumstances (for example, you may be able to skip things you find students already know, or you may need to go over things in more detail in later sessions. It's often a good idea to build in a session for revision or summing up a module). On the question of attendance, consider letting students know which sessions are "essential" and which are "advisable" to attend. Most

SESSION 4

JAMIE OLIVER AND THE NAKED ADVERTISING PROCESS

DATE: **24 November**

TIME: **13:30 – 15:30**

PLACE: **Room 214**

TUTOR: **Sarah Reece**

This session looks at the development of a recent advertising campaign for Safeway starring TV chef Jamie Oliver.

By the end of the session you should be able to:

- **OUTLINE THE PROCESS OF COMMISSIONING A CAMPAIGN**
- **USE DIFFERENT RESEARCH METHODS ('QUALITATIVE' AND 'QUANTITATIVE') TO TEST YOUR ADVERTISING CONCEPTS**
- **EVALUATE A CASE STUDY (THE SAFEWAY CAMPAIGN) AND IDENTIFY KEY INCIDENTS**
- **YOU WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO PRODUCE A PLAN OF ATTACK FOR THE FOLLOWING WEEK'S WORK**

During the session you will be briefed on an important task, and given vital information for the written report for this module.

Before the session, please watch the video "How Advertising Works", two copies of which are reserved for you behind the desk in the library. When you borrow this you will be given a worksheet each – do the short tasks on the sheet while you watch and bring your notes with you to the session; you will need them! You will not be able to take the video out of the library during the week before this session.

THE STUDENT-FRIENDLY VERSION OF THE SESSION PLAN GIVEN OUT AT THE START OF A MODULE

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students will skip one or two sessions for various reasons so letting them know which ones are not safe to skip will give you brownie points with them – in fact, we have found that attendance as a whole *improves* because students trust your judgement more! In the example above, we use the words "important" and "vital" within the context of what will be covered to indicate to students that they really should go to this session.

REFERENCES

CANNON, R. AND NEWBLE, D. (2000)
*A Handbook for Teachers in Universities and Colleges:
A Guide to Improving Teaching Methods,*
Kogan Page, London.